



## INTIMATIONS.

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THE HONGKONG DISPENSARY.

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Hongkong, 20th January, 1904.

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Only communications relating to the news columns

should be addressed to "The Editor."

Correspondents are requested to forward their names

and address with communications addressed to the

Editor, not for publication, but as a record of good

faith.

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side of the paper only.

No anonymous signed communications that have

appeared in other papers will be inserted.

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be sent before 11 a.m. on the day of publication.

After that hour the supply is limited. Only supplied

for Cash.

DEATH.

On the 28th January, at Eastbourne, Mancoy Oc-

tavian, 10 years, late H.M.'s Consul in Java,

aged 75 years.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, MARCH 9th, 1904.

The conditions of the agreement concluded

between the Eastern Extension, Australasia,

and China Telegraph Company, and Her

Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies

are very fair and equitable. It is only reason-

able that in cases of force majeure, which

means in times of war, the Company should be

relieved of the responsibility of guarantee-

ing the condition of the cable, for it would then,

of course, run the risk of being cut,

and the fact of its share ends only touch-

ing British territory. It is also only reason-

able that all messages despatched on the

service either of the Imperial Government or

on those of the Governments of the

Straits Settlements and Hongkong should be

sent at a reduction over the line of the

Company, and the concession made of one

half the rate is a liberal one on the part of

the Company. For such a concession its

reducing stations may well be exempted

from payment of port and light dues in

Singapore, Lyden, and Hongkong. Article 4

is more generally important and interest-

ing than the foregoing, inasmuch as it con-

cedes the practical monopoly to the Eastern

Extension Telegraph Company of the Straits

Settlements and Hongkong. This concession,

is, however, made subject to conditions which

will effectively prevent it becoming a burden

or clog on the colonies mentioned, for Her

Majesty's Government reserves the right, by

Article 5, to cancel the preceding articles on

twelve months' notice, by purchasing the

cable for the sum of £200,000, the estimated

cost of laying it. It is by no means improb-

able that at some future day the Imperial

Government may find it desirable or politic

to work the telegraphic as well as the postal

service of the Empire, or at least to give

the lines having strategic as well as commercial

importance. It was possibly with some such

provision, or idea that this clause was in-

serted, or with an eye to the desirability of

obtaining control of the cables in the event

of a foreign war. It is of the highest im-

portance that telegraphic communication

should be maintained with the farthest out-

posts of the Empire in times of war, and it

is partly in consequence of this feeling that

from Singapore, Hongkong, which

coaches British territory, and which

British Borneo into connection with the

colonies, helps to give the Empire

of unity for protection in times of

Having secured this provision, the

effective maintenance of communication

with this the Ultima Thule of the Empire

from India, the Imperial Government is

now evidently anxious to complete the circle

round the world, which Puck was

made to talk by the immortal Bard of Avon.

The great dramatics could hardly have

imagined, when he wrote that famous pro-

logue—

"I'll put a girdle round the Earth."

In forty minutes.

how near it was to prophecy, for the power

and name of electricity were then all

dreamed of. Still less could he have

conceived that the girdle could ever be made

to pass in an almost unbroken line through

British territory. But this is what is now

being aimed at by Great Britain and her

Colonies, and the fact is plainly foreboded

by Article 7 of the agreement with the

Eastern Extension Telegraph Company. It

reads:— "Nothing in this Agreement shall

affect the right of Her Majesty's Govern-

ment to grant to the Government of the

Dominion of Canada or of any Colony in

"Australia" permission to lay or cause to be

"laid submarine telegraphic cable connecting

"Hongkong with Canada or with Australia,

"provided such connection with Canada or

"Australia be completed within five years

"from the date of this agreement, after

"which date the exception in this Article

"mentioned shall become null and void."

It would appear as though the Imperial

Government wished to give a spur to the

laying of such cables by a provision which

leaves the colonies interested only a period

of five years wherein to carry it out. If

the Canadians lay the proposed cable,

there would be direct telegraphic com-

munication from Great Britain to Hong-

kong through British cables and wires

across the Dominion of Canada, and

from India to Hongkong also by through

lines. It is most unlikely that both of these

sources of communication would ever be

broken at one time, and, so far as telegraph-

y is concerned, the British Empire would be

independent, in case of need, of any foreign

cable, more especially when, as is con-

templated, Canada and the Australian colonies

are brought into direct cable communication.

If the cable is to be laid from Canada to

Hongkong no time should be lost in pushing

on the enterprise inasmuch as a line to

Japan from the United States is even now

under consideration, and if that be laid first

there would be little prospect of the Cana-

dian cable being provided for some time.

The Band of the 1st Shanghai Light

Infantry will play the following programme on

the 10th inst., commencing at 7.30 p.m.:

"The March of the Light Infantry."

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